

Orange and Union Streets Neighborhood Study  
Elisha Green House  
9 Union Street  
Nantucket  
Nantucket County  
Massachusetts

HABS No. MASS-1056

HABS  
MASS  
10-NANT  
76A-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

ORANGE AND UNION STREETS NEIGHBORHOOD STUDY  
ELISHA GREEN HOUSEHABS  
MASS  
10-NANT  
76A-

Location: 9 Union Street (on west side and on south corner of Stone Alley), Nantucket, Massachusetts

Present Owners: Zeta B. Spinney and Mildred G. Foster

Present Occupants: Same

Present Use: Seasonal occupancy

Brief Statement of Significance: Typical Nantucket four-bay house; part of the Orange and Union Streets Neighborhood Study (MASS-1014).

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History:

## 1. Original and subsequent owners:

- 1820 -- Elisha Green bought land from Christopher Mitchell for \$200. Mitchell agreed to remove buildings and stones thereon and Green agreed to support and keep in repair to the extent of said land the south half of Gunter Lane. The house was probably built at this time.
- 1855 -- The Ladies Howard Society of Nantucket inherited under will of Elisha Green 2/3 of the property while 1/3 was left to his widow, Temperance Green.
- 1856 -- Thomas Hendrick, mariner, bought 2/3 property from The Ladies Howard Society for \$433. and 1/3 from the Executors of will of Temperance Green for \$216.
- 1907 -- Ella M. Ingraham bought the property at Public Auction, being all interest of Hendrick heirs for \$780.
- 1908 -- Hannah DeMott bought from Ella M. Ingraham.
- 1912 -- Alfred and Catherine Sylvaro bought from DeMott.
- 1927 -- Florence W. Hilton bought from Catherine Sylvaro, widow of Alfred Sylvaro.
- 1942 -- Alice May McRae bought from Florence W. Hilton.
- 1944 to date -- Zeta B. Spinney and Mildred G. Foster bought from Executors under will of Alice May McRae.  
(Abstract: Records Registry Deeds, Nantucket, Mass.)

2. Date of erection: c. 1820 (Abstract: Deeds of 1820 and 1855, Registry Deeds, Nantucket.)

3. Architect: None
4. Original plans, construction, etc.: The house is plain and severe with a great deal of dignity and charm. It stands right on the street with picket fence at sides. Shingles were used on the sides and back, while clapboards were placed on the front to give it a more elegant appearance without offending their Quaker religion.
5. Notes on alterations and additions: The rear roof of this house may have been raised after the main structure was built and an ell added at the back.

B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure:

Gunter Lane, mentioned as being on the north side of this property, was then a lane from Levi Starbuck's barn to Union Street. It is now the lower part of Stone Alley.

Union Street was first paved with cobblestones but these were covered in 1899 with bituminous concrete. The street must have been a hive of business activity around 1830 for in addition to the warehouses, candle factories, ropewalks, etc. in the section below it, several of the houses on the west side of Union Street had thriving businesses going on in their high cellars. Elisha Green and Thaddeus Hussey conducted a prosperous "Soap House" in the vicinity of Green's home, but the location is not clear. In the next house to the south was a bake shop where four or five men worked making ship-bread or hardtack, a pure water cracker for use on long voyages on whaleships. It was sent to sea in new casks or large hogsheads, designated ultimately as receptacles for oil taken on the whaling voyages.

The Ladies Howard Society of Nantucket, which inherited two-thirds of this property in 1855 under the will of Elisha Green, was a large and important charitable society incorporated in 1846, the year of the Great Fire, when there was great hardship. Its labors covered a period of about seventy years, and their records were given to the Nantucket Historical Association in 1919 and are preserved in the collections at the Fair Street Museum.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old Views: Photograph in Brief Historical Data by Joseph Ellis Coffee Farnham, 1915, page 150; drawing "Under the Bank" in Nantucket, the Far Away Island by William O. Stevens, New York, 1936, page 12; photograph in A Mirror of Nantucket by George Allen Fowlkes, New Jersey: Press of Interstate, 1959, page 52; photograph of Union Street 1891 in Rambling Through the Streets and Lanes of Nantucket by Edouard A. Stackpole, 1969, page 27.

PART II. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were prepared as part of the Orange and Union Streets Neighborhood Study (MASS-1014) made in the summer of 1970 by the Historic American Buildings Survey on Nantucket, Massachusetts. This is the fifth summer project of a continuing HABS comprehensive survey of the early architecture and urban design of Nantucket financed by a grant from the Nantucket Historical Trust.

The project was under the general supervision of James C. Massey, Chief of the Historic American Buildings Survey. Project Director was Professor F. Blair Reeves, A.I.A., of the University of Florida. Historical information was provided by Mrs. Marie M. Coffin of Nantucket, Massachusetts. Photographs are by Jack E. Boucher of Linwood, New Jersey. The material was edited for deposit in the Library of Congress by Mrs. Constance Werner Ramirez, August 1971.